

# **A Safer Meal is Only 4 Steps Away**

Everyone enjoys a delicious home cooked meal that's served warm and tastes delicious. In this crazy world we live in, it can often feel difficult to find the time to prepare the food we eat safely. But, now more than ever, it's imperative that you make the right choices while cooking to keep your family safe from food illness. A few extra minutes can ensure that you've done everything in your power to create a safe meal free from the viruses and bacteria that can cause harm. Here are four steps that lead to a safer meal:

## **1. Clean**

**Always wash your food, hands, counters, and cooking tools.**

- Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Do this before and after touching food.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, forks, spoons, knives, and countertops with hot soapy water. Do this after working with each food item.
- Rinse fruits and veggies.
- Clean the lids on canned goods before opening.

## **2. Separate (Keep Apart)**

**Keep raw foods to themselves. Germs can spread from one food to another.**

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from other foods. Do this in your shopping cart, bags, and fridge.
- Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.
- Use a special cutting board or plate for raw foods only.

## **3. Cook**

**Foods need to get hot and stay hot. Heat kills germs.**

- Cook to safe temperatures:
  - Beef, Pork, Lamb 145 °F
  - Fish 145 °F
  - Ground Beef, Pork, Lamb 160 °F
  - Turkey, Chicken, Duck 165 °F
- Use a food thermometer to make sure that food is done. You can't always tell by looking.

## **4. Chill**

**Put food in the fridge right away.**

- 2-Hour Rule: Put foods in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours after cooking or buying from the store. Do this within 1 hour if it is 90 degrees or hotter outside.
- Never thaw food by simply taking it out of the fridge. Thaw food:
  - In the fridge
  - Under cold water
  - In the microwave
- Marinate foods in the fridge.

For more information on food safety visit:

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/free-publications-women/food-safety-home>

<https://harrisburgpa.gov/codes/health/>